

Syllabus

Blockseminar: Policy Analysis and Impact Evaluation

Summer semester 2018

08.06.2018 – 10.06.2018, 8.00am (s.t. – 8am sharp!) – 5.00pm. Scharnhorststr. 100, SCH 100.301

Institute of Political Science, Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster

Instructor: Janina Grabs

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Office hours: Tuesdays, 10.00am – 12.00pm, or by appointment

Course description:

Policy makers and analysts around the world are facing difficult policy questions every day. In a world of complex political and socioeconomic interactions, predicting the effectiveness of a particular policy and identifying potential unintended consequences is a difficult task. This intensive seminar provides a first introduction to methods of analyzing policy options and evaluating choices taken in order to inform the public decision-making process. We proceed in two parts. First, we examine prescriptive methods – that is, methods for weighing the costs and benefits of alternative courses of policy action, and deciding which policy "option" represents the best -- most effective, most efficient, most equitable, etc. -- choice for government action. Second, we look at methods for evaluating policy and program performance after it has been implemented, in order to assess whether or not a policy or program has been working effectively. In this latter part, we will look at different statistical methods (both experimental and quasi-experimental) of isolating the impact of an intervention from the surrounding circumstances in order to draw sound conclusions on the success of a program. Students will therefore become acquainted with a broad toolkit of quantitative and qualitative models and techniques, study real-world examples of their application, and take first steps towards practicing their implementation.

Course aims and learning objectives:

The main goal of the course is to help students think systematically, critically, and creatively about ways to give prescriptive and evaluative policy advice to decision makers in the public, private and non-profit realm, using a wide range of qualitative and quantitative methods. Upon completion of this course, students should have a broad understanding of the policy cycle and where evidence-based policy advice may enter it; be able to identify the appropriate analytical or evaluative tool for specific requests for policy advice; be able to explain the underlying rationale of the different tools studied; and be able to understand and derive key insights from real-world policy analysis and impact evaluation studies.

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Assessment overview:

- Course work: Complete readings in the syllabus and participate actively during class.
- Studienleistung: For your Studienleistung, you will give a short presentation on one of the example papers listed in the syllabus that you will pick at the beginning of the semester, and write a one-page policy brief on it that will be distributed to your fellow classmates.
 - In both your presentation and your policy brief, you should answer these three questions:
 1. What is the policy decision that this study addresses?
 2. How did the researchers implement the method or tool in this scenario?
 3. On the basis of their results, what would you recommend to policy-makers?
 - Your **presentation** will have a maximum of 5 PowerPoint slides and will run a maximum of 10 minutes.
 - Your **policy brief** will be maximum 1 page long and be written addressing the policy makers in question. Take care – these are not scientists! Be clear, concise, and snappy in your recommendations – or they may get bored and distracted and never implement your advice!
- Prüfungsleistung: The Prüfungsleistung will consist of a „Hausarbeit nach Maßgabe der Prüfungsordnung“ (term paper according to the stipulations of the examination regulations)
 - Language: German or English
 - Length: 5.000 – 6.000 words (ca. 15-18 pages) including full academic references – words, not page numbers, count!
 - **Final deadline: 30.09.2018** (submission via e-mail to janina.grabs@uni-muenster.de)
 - For this course, you will have two options:
 1. Try your hand at one of the presented methods, applied to a policy question of your choice (I would recommend a prescriptive method or an evaluative one if you have a strong statistical background – talk to me about data availability!)
 2. Provide a critical literature review of one particular policy subject (e.g. minimum wage increases) and different policy analyses or impact evaluations done on the subject. Compare and contrast the different policies evaluated – how do they differ? – as well as the different types of evaluation measures used. What does the evidence tell us on the likely success or impact of this policy? Do we have enough evidence to be certain? Provide a careful critique.
 - You will receive the grading rubric that I use to evaluate term papers in due course. In general, a successful paper will have all of the following:
 - A clear and focused research question;
 - A straightforward thesis statement;
 - A clear structure (e.g. Introduction – Argument 1 – Argument 2 – Argument 3 – conclusion);
 - Convincing arguments grounded in primary research as well as theoretical concepts;
 - A conclusion that summarizes the main results;
 - Uniform in-text citations and reference list, following one single citation style (I would recommend APA or Chicago).

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Course calendar

Friday morning

8.00am – 9.45am: Introduction

Head, B.W., 2016. Toward more “evidence-informed” policy making?. *Public Administration Review*, 76(3), pp.472-484.

Bardes, B., and Dubnick, M., 1979. The why and how of policy analysis. *Society* 16(6), pp. 11-16.

Geva-May, I., and Pal, L.A., 1999. Good fences make good neighbours. Policy evaluation and policy analysis - Exploring the differences. *Evaluation* 5(3), pp.259-77.

Discussion:

“Even if sound evidence that is useful for policy analysis continues to expand, the political nature of policy debate and decision making is generally unfavorable to science-driven perspectives.”

10.00am – 12.00pm: The public policy process

Howard, C., 2005. The policy cycle: A model of post-Machiavellian policy making?. *Australian Journal of Public Administration* 64(3), pp.3-13.

Weible, C.M., Heikkila, T., DeLeon, P., and Sabatier, P.A., 2012. Understanding and influencing the policy process. *Policy Sciences* 45(1), pp.1-21.

Friday afternoon

1.00pm – 2.45pm: Introduction to prescriptive policy analysis

Mayer, I.S., van Daalen, C.E. and Bots, P.W., 2013. Perspectives on policy analysis: A framework for understanding and design. *International Journal of Technology, Policy and Management*, 4(2), pp.169-191.

3.00pm – 5.00pm: Extrapolation, forecasting and modeling

Bankes, S., 1993. Exploratory modeling for policy analysis. *Operations research*, 41(3), pp.435-449.

Examples:

(1) Ashley, D.J., Hanson, P. and Veldhuis, J., 1995. A policy-sensitive traffic forecasting model for Schiphol Airport. *Journal of Air Transport Management*, 2(2), pp.89-97.

(2) Banse, M., van Meijl, H., Tabeau, A., and Woltjer, G., 2008. Will EU biofuel policies affect global agricultural markets? *European Review of Agricultural Economics*, 35(2), pp.117-141.

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Saturday morning

8.00am – 9.45am: Cost-benefit analysis

Ackerman, F. and Heinzerling, L., 2002. Pricing the priceless: cost-benefit analysis of environmental protection. *University of Pennsylvania Law Review*, 150(5), pp.1553-1584.

Examples:

(3) Rusetska, U. and Grabs, J., 2013. The value of oil extraction in Ecuador's rainforests. A cost-benefit analysis of the Yasuní ITT exploitation project. Sveriges Lantbruksuniversitet (SLU).

(4) Stern, N. 2006. Stern review: The economics of climate change. Executive Summary. Cambridge University Press.

10.00am – 12.00pm: Ethical analysis

Amy, D.J., 1984. Why policy analysis and ethics are incompatible. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 3(4), pp.573-591.

Examples:

(5) Barnhill, A. 2011. Impact and ethics of excluding sweetened beverages from the SNAP program. *American Journal of Public Health*, 101(11), pp. 2037-2043.

(6) Jarvie, J. A., and Malone, R. E. 2008. Children's secondhand smoke exposure in private homes and cars: an ethical analysis. *American Journal of Public Health*, 98(12), pp. 2140-2145.

Saturday afternoon

1.00pm – 2.00pm: Introduction to impact evaluation (log frame and theory of change; treatment and counterfactual)

Ravallion, M. 2001. The mystery of the vanishing benefits: An introduction to impact evaluation

2.00pm – 3.45pm: The "Gold Standard"?: Randomized control trials

Banerjee, A.V., and Duflo, E., 2009. The experimental approach to development economics. *Annual Review of Economics*, 1, pp. 151-178.

Barrett, C.B. and Carter, M.R., 2010. The power and pitfalls of experiments in development economics: Some non-random reflections. *Applied Economic Perspectives and Policy*, 32(4), pp.515-548.

Examples:

(7) Duflo, E., Hanna, R., and Ryan, S. 2007. *Monitoring works: Getting teachers to come to school* (No. w11880). National Bureau of Economic Research.

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(8) Castleman, B.L. and Page, L.C., 2015. Summer nudging: Can personalized text messages and peer mentor outreach increase college going among low-income high school graduates? *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization*, 115, pp.144-160.

4.00pm – 5.00pm: Integrating process evaluation

Saunders, R.P., Evans, M.H. and Joshi, P., 2005. Developing a process-evaluation plan for assessing health promotion program implementation: a how-to guide. *Health promotion practice*, 6(2), pp.134-147.

Example:

(9) Oakley, A. and Strange, V. and Stephenson, J. and Forrest, S. and Monteiro, H. and RIPPLE Study Team., 2004. Evaluating processes: a case study of a randomized controlled trial of sex education. *Evaluation*, 10(4), pp. 440-462.

Sunday morning

8.00am – 9.45am: Overview of quasi-experimental methods

White, H. and Sabarwal, S., 2014. Quasi-Experimental Design and Methods. Methodological Briefs, Impact Evaluation No. 8. UNICEF. URL: https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/brief_8_quasi-experimental%20design_eng.pdf

Examples:

10.00am – 11.00am: Difference-in-differences

(10) Card, D. and Krueger, A., 1994. Minimum wages and employment: A case study of the fast-food industry in New Jersey and Pennsylvania. *American Economic Review* 84, pp.772-793.

(11) Chemin, M. and Wasmer, E., 2009. Using Alsace-Moselle local laws to build a difference-in-differences estimation strategy of the employment effects of the 35-hour workweek regulation in France. *Journal of Labor Economics*, 27(4), pp.487-524.

11.00am – 12.00pm: Regression discontinuity design

(12) van der Klaauw, W., 2002. Estimating the effect of financial aid offers on college enrollment: A regression-discontinuity approach. *International Economic Review* 43(4), pp. 1249-1287.

(13) Ekberg J., Eriksson, R. and Friebel, G. 2005. Parental leave – A policy evaluation of the Swedish “Daddy-Month” reform. IZA DP1617. <http://ftp.iza.org/dp1617.pdf>

Sunday afternoon

1.00pm – 2.45pm: (Propensity-score) matching and selection on observables

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(14) Dale, S.B. and Krueger, A.B., 2002. Estimating the payoff to attending a more selective college: An application of selection on observables and unobservables. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 117(4), pp.1491-1527.

(15) Langenskiöld, S. and Rubin, D., 2008. Outcome-free design of observational studies: Peer influence on smoking. *Annals of Economics and Statistics*, 91/92, pp. 107-125.

3.00pm – 5.00pm: Reflection and closing

Do policy-makers listen? Crossing the science-policy interface

Schneider, A. and Ingram, H., 1988. Systematically pinching ideas: A comparative approach to policy design. *Journal of Public Policy*, 8(1), pp.61-80.

Young, J.C., Waylen, K.A., Sarkki, S., Albon, S., Bainbridge, I., Balian, E., Davidson, J., Edwards, D., Fairley, R., Margerison, C. and McCracken, D., 2014. Improving the science-policy dialogue to meet the challenges of biodiversity conservation: having conversations rather than talking at one-another. *Biodiversity and Conservation*, 23(2), pp.387-404.